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FURNITURE WORLD



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Quick Ship!

Domestic Upholstery Ships in 2 Weeks!

Can't Wait to See Our New Upholstery? You Don't Have To.

The wait is over for Collezione Europa's stylish new upholstery – now with 2-week shipping! Bring the convenience, savings and selection to your showroom with a large variety of the latest in luxury leathers, exposed wood frames and down-filled cushions.









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OPERATIONS*management*

Add 250,000 Gross Margin $$ Without Raising Prices!

Clearance sales may have their time and place, however, there are many other more productive ways to increase GMROI. You can do this without increasing prices or holding inventory clearance sales. **PAGE 4.**

MARKETING*management*

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Decorating seminars help customers solve problems, and they position you as a home furnishings expert. Margarett DeGange presents a script you can use to put on an *Accessorizing Seminar* for customers and prospects. **PAGE 44.**

Convert More Phone Price Inquiries Into Sales

This is the first in a FURNITURE WORLD Magazine series written by Leslie Carothers to help home furnishings retailers manage their intentional and unintentional internet presence. This month she explains how to turn internet inquiries into solid sales. **PAGE 10.**

Don't Annoy Customers With Poor Follow-up Calls!

Although follow-up is the way to get be-back customers, when improperly executed, follow-up calls can be counterproductive. For mega-retailers, bad follow-up can work just enough times to keep them doing it, but for everyone else, it just doesn't make sense. **PAGE 38.**

DEPARTMENTS

Best Selling Design

Best selling furniture and accessory designs. **PAGES 64-71.**



Cover Photo:

Featured this month is a selection from **Collezione Europa's** new, stylish, domestically made upholstery line, now with 2-week shipping. The line offers a large selection of the latest in luxury leathers, exposed wood frames and down-filled cushions. Collezione Europa designs include bedrooms, upholstery, occasional, dining rooms, casual dining, entertainment, bars & bar stools, accent chairs, and accents. See page 1 in this issue or visit *www.czeusa.com* for more information.

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HOW TO ADD 250,000

...gross margin dollars by improving GMROI without increasing prices!

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT BY BY DAVID MCMAHON

Did the headline catch your attention? If so, you will want to know that this feat can be accomplished by thinking outside the box and really concentrating on distribution efficiencies. Increasing the speed and efficiency of handling merchandise will cause your cash flow and profit to sky rocket! This is due to higher return on your investment and reduced associated inventory carrying costs.

The traditional formula for GMROI (Gross Margin Return On Investments) is gross margin (GM) dollars produced over a year, per dollars of inventory invested on average (GMROI = GM $ / IN $). It is simple to see that if you just increase gross margin and decrease inventory you will increase GMROI. The trouble with using this easy to understand equation is that the actions to make GM go up or inventory go down are sometimes less than creative.

To increase GM, many people automatically think of increasing price or not selling at discounts. And, to decrease inventory on hand, clearance sales or sweeping discounts are a favorite. Unfortunately, these are counter productive strategies, as gross margins are offset. Clearance sales may have there time and place, however, there are many other more productive ways to increase GMROI, and you can do it without increasing prices or holding inventory clearance sales.

Let's look at an alternative GMROI formula:

GMROI = Turns x (Gross margin % / Cost of goods %)

In this formula, Gross Margin Percentage equals 100 x (1 - cost of goods sold/ net sales) = 100 x (gross margin/ net sales).

Knowing this will allow your creative juices to flow more freely. And so can your merchandise! The secret is that by flowing your inventory faster (higher turns), you can obtain a much higher GMROI. So what's it worth?

Let's look at the two examples in Figures 1 and 2 on the following page, and keep GMROI constant at 45%.

What's the Difference? In Figure 1, store B turns inventory 11 days faster than Store A. So, .3 more turns a year equates to 11 days. Doesn't seem like much, right?

Now, let's look at the GMROI impact of flowing inventory 11 days faster in Figure 2.

What's the Difference? In Figure 2, store B makes .25 cents more for every dollar it invests in inventory than store A. So, what's that value of a quarter? It's

STORE B TURNS INVENTORY 11 DAYS FASTER

than Store A. So, .3 more turns a year equals 11 days. Doesn't seem like much, right?





STORE B MAKES .25 CENTS MORE

for every dollar it invests in inventory than store A. So, what's that value of a quarter? It's MASSIVE!!!

MASSIVE!!!

At a $1 million in inventory, 25 cents in GMROI is equal to $250,000 in gross margin produced!

Using the traditional GMROI formula of GM $ / Inventory $, and holding inventory constant, some simple algebra shows us that the increase in GM $ is the GMROI Increase x Inventory value

GM $ Increase = 25 cents x $1 million = $ 250,000.

Where else can you find $250,000 lying around?

Do you think it is worth it to try to improve your inventory flow efficiency so you can turn your merchandise 11 days faster? Of course it is!

WAYS TO GET YOUR 11 DAYS AND THE EXTRA $250,000

Quick Ship: Margins are not everything. Speed matters.

Figure 1

STORE A
Turns = 3 times per year
Number of days to turn inventory = 365 / 3 = 121 days

STORE B
Turns = 3.3 times per year
Number of days to turn inventory = 365 / 3.3 = 110 days

Figure 2

STORE A
GMROI = 3 x .45 / .55 = $2.45

STORE B
GMROI = 3.3 x .45 x .55 = $2.7

Vendors that allow for faster order fulfillment permit retailers to carry less inventory. The best example of this I've seen is an Australian retailer who can deliver custom, high end sofas to customers within a week.

Fast Receiving: Don't let merchandise sit on your dock un-received in your system. Use the latest technology to get it counted into your inventory. The fastest operations are receiving via wireless scanners as merchandise is unloaded. This creates a culture of zero delay within a business.

Speedy Delivery Scheduling: Implement systems that show what merchandise can be scheduled, so you can book delivery times with customers as fast as possible. You should work towards having a high majority of your completed sales scheduled.

Routing and Mapping Automation for More Efficient Delivery: Use automated systems to schedule faster, fill trucks easier, and take the best routing. The benefits are faster customer delivery and significantly reduced costs.

Improve Customer Pick-up's: As with deliveries, contact customers ASAP to set a time for them to pick up their merchandise. Companies that do this are seen as being more professional, saving their customers and themselves time.

Display all Merchandise – FAST: This is an area where many stores can use improvement. How can you sell something if you do not display it? Build a process similar to this:

- *Create a printout of all available merchandise that is in your warehouse but is not on display (every day).*
- *Create transfer orders.*
- *Physically check merchandise and determine the best price points.*
- *Put new merchandise in high traffic floor slots to properly test their value with your customers.*

Efficient Customer Service: The return and repair process in the best companies is systematized so that it is a quick process for both stores and customers. You should know exactly how many customer service issues are outstanding, what needs to be repaired, and what needs to be replaced. You do not want damaged or opened mer-

HOW TO ADD 250,000 GROSS MARGIN DOLLARS...

chandise choking your profits. One of my best clients runs daily reports and takes actions to minimize dead inventory, thus increasing turns. He estimates this alone saves him over $50,000 per year.

Best Seller Recognition: Great managers track winning merchandise and respective rates of sale, so that they can reorder at the right time and in the appropriate quantity. Have this proven product available for your customer using a JIT (just-in-time), not JIC (just-in-case), inventory dramatically increases turns. How? By increasing sales, decreasing lead time and minimizing inventory.

Burn Your Dogs: "If it doesn't sell in 60 days, take it out to the front lawn and BURN IT!" This advice is from an exemplary retailer who gets $3 GMROI and over $400 sales per square foot. Translation: Use a markdown aging strategy that turns inventory quickly.

Buy New Merchandise - At the Right Time: Create an "open to buy" that acts as your stoplight when bringing on new items. Red is when you are over inventoried, yellow is on the edge, and green is when you are at an efficient GMROI (over $2), or Inventory to Sales (Under 20%). Best practice businesses use these metrics to determine their new purchasing actions.

MARGINS ARE NOT EVERYTHING.

Speed matters. Vendors that allow for faster order fulfillment enable you to carry fewer inventories.



Get Your People Up To Speed as Industry Professionals: Just like you get a lawyer to handle your legal issues and an accountant to handle your taxes, get an industry expert to help your people implement procedures that yield a fast GMROI. Productive and motivated people that produce the highest, are the key.

So there you have it: 11 ways that can help you turn your inventory 11 days faster and maximize GMROI. Implement these ideas and you can make an extra $250,000 in GM per million in inventory invested.

David McMahon is a Business Coach for PROFITconsulting. PROFITsystems delivers a "Total Success System" through PROFIT professional, PROFITconsulting, PROFITgroups, PROFITuniversity, PROFITfreight, and PROFITservices. These business units offer best-practice solutions designed to maximize cash flow and profitability. Questions about this article or related topics can be sent to David care of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine at davidm@furninfo.com or call him direct at 1-866-325-0018.



"HELLO... HOW MUCH IS THE SOFA ON YOUR WEBSITE"

Salespeople can turn phone calls into sales or turn potential buyers off.

INTERNET MARKETING BY LESLIE CAROTHERS

Editor's Note: *This is the first in a FURNITURE WORLD Magazine series, written by Leslie Carothers to help home furnishings retailers to manage their intentional and unintentional internet presence. Ms. Carothers is founder and principal of The Kaleidoscope Partnership, a nationally known training and consulting firm.*

Ring... Ring...

Salesperson: "Good morning, thank you for calling XYZ Home Furnishings, my name is Tom, how may I help you today?"

Customer: "I saw a piece of furniture on your website and I'd like a price, please."

Salesperson: "I'm sorry, but we don't quote prices over the phone." Our pricing depends upon a range of factors including what finish you select, what fabric you choose, etc."

Customer: "Well, could you give me a general range then?"

Salesperson: "I'm not sure about that specific piece, let me go check." "Can you hold on a minute?"

Customer: (sighing)"Yes, I'll hold on."

If the above dialogue is fairly typical of the type of phone interaction your sales associates are having with customers, then you have a golden training opportunity to help them convert more of these "price shopping" phone inquiries into sales opportunities and/or actual sales.

FIVE KEY CONCEPTS

Here are five key concepts to keep in mind when selling over the phone to help you and your sales associates turn price shoppers into loyal buyers:

1. It starts with making sure your sales associates know and understand everything that's on your website.

- *Do they know what is advertised that day on your website?*
- *Do they know what products you are showcasing that day?*
- *Do they have a cheat sheet that shows them the general range of pricing for those items you are featuring on your website?*
- *How many steps do they have to take before they can get a customer an answer?*
- *Do they know what brands you are linking to from your website?*

CREATE AN ACTUAL PHONE SCRIPT FOR THEM

detailing how to handle price inquiry phone calls. Sales consultants are often not sure about what to say during a phone inquiry regarding price.



"I SAW THIS SOFA..."

- *Have they ever looked at those manufacturers' websites?*
- *Do they understand how to use your website? Do they have easy, fast and instant access to the internet from where they answer the phone?*

In other words, are they working from a position of strength or weakness when they pick up your phone to talk to your potential customer?

Remember that your consumers think of your website as just another storefront and they expect the same level of service and assistance. (Think of what auto dealerships are doing with internet sales these days.)

2. Now that your sales consultants are armed with knowledge, training and access to your website, it's time to have your sales manager role-play and/or listen in on customer/consultant conversations. The purpose, of course, is to give positive developmental feedback so consultants clearly understands what is expected of them.

Young consultants, especially, have a difficult time with verbal interaction because they are so used to text messaging and instant messaging their friends. Their ability to transition from one thought to another VERBALLY is quite often limited. Have your sales manager spend extra time with them to overcome this obstacle.

3. Now that you've assessed everyone's sales skills over the phone, create an actual phone script that details how to handle phone call price inquiries. Sales consultants are often not sure about what to say during a phone inquiry regarding price. Because of this, many will arbitrarily decide that a customer isn't serious and cut them off. Since they lack the proper skills, it's easier for associates to get them off the phone, without making an effort to convert them.

Make sure your script includes common objections and how to overcome them. You want to make sure your consultants are as empowered as possible when dealing with customers coming to you from your virtual storefront.

"THE PIECE YOU'RE ASKING ABOUT IS REALLY *(insert complimentary phrase). You have really good taste. Tell me, what do you like about this piece? How do you see it fitting into your room?"*



4. Work on listening skills with your sales associates. Again, role play. Listening is hard enough to do in person, but over the phone, it's absolutely critical since there is no body language to interpret. Help them understand that they have to give the person on the other end all the time they need to verbalize their needs and wants.

This statement or one similar can be critical to their success: "Before we move on, is there anything else you'd like to add or that you've thought of since we began talking?" "I want to make sure I hear everything that's important to you before I answer your questions."

5. Another important phone skill to cultivate when working with internet price queries is affirmation of choice. This is why it is critical to give your consultants fast and easy access to your website. They need to be on the same page, literally, as the customer so they can have the following dialogue:

Salesperson: "The piece you're asking about is really (insert complimentary phrase). You have really good taste." Tell me, what do you like about this piece? How do you see it fitting into your room?"

This, readers, is THE key phrase for all internet phone inquiries. Establish rapport by complimenting them on their selection. It's so much easier than selling in person because the customer has already pre-selected and is just calling you for a price. This is a customer that, more times than not, is ready to buy!

The question for the customer is, "Who are they going to buy it from?" The question for you is, "How can I add as much value as possible to their phone experience so that they want to buy it from us?"

At this point, the customer, seeking a direct response to his or her question might say something such as, "all I really need is the price, please."

Here is what the well-prepared salesperson should say:

Salesperson: "I'd be happy to give you a range of prices



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Ron Werner, Jim Hering, & Zach
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Kim Fleming-Crouchet,
Owner, Pippin McGee

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Internet Phone Queries

for this piece which will be dependent on your fabric and finish selection (and whatever else may be in the mix), but first, how soon do you need this piece in your home?"

This is basic qualifying, but you would be surprised how many sales consultants never think to ask this question over the phone.

By having them ask this question, you are alerting the customer to the fact that you may or may not have it in stock and are opening up the possibility for the following dialogue:

Customer: "I need it in my house in four weeks." "Do you have it in stock?"

What follows is the golden dialogue opportunity that turns lookers into potential buyers:

Sales Consultant: "No, but we DO have several pieces similar to it that are in stock and on our sales floor." "Is it convenient for you to make an appointment with me on Thursday so I can meet you and be prepared to show you what we have available that would meet your delivery needs?"

YOU HAVE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO

help salespeople convert "price shopping" phone inquiries into sales opportunities and/or actual sales.

If the customer is serious and local, nine times out of ten they will agree to this suggestion.

The critical components are that the salesperson makes an appointment and is prepared. Don't waste that customer's time. If they agree, they are coming in to make a buying decision. Remember, they've already done all their research over the internet and have called you for a price on a style they know they like. Even though you don't have that exact piece in stock, if they agree to come in and look, you KNOW that they are serious and are not completely sold on having to have that exact piece.

Come close to the style they want, treat them like kings and queens, give them a good value for their money, help them have fun while shopping and watch those pesky phone inquiries turn into loyal and valuable lifetime customers.

Leslie Carothers, is a 25 year veteran of the home furnishings industry and the principal of The Kaleidoscope Partnership - a national company that helps retailers and manufacturers leverage the internet and their websites to powerfully and profitably impact their businesses. Her areas of expertise include: Using analytics to drive profitable growth through different business units; writing content for retail and manufacturer websites; increasing conversion rates from phone or email inquiries; and helping retailers and manufacturers lay out their websites for maximum ease of consumer and consultant use and functionality. Questions on any aspect of internet marketing can be directed to her via the www.furninfo.com message boards or email leslie@furninfo.com. She can also be reached directly at 713.705.2482.


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DOUBLE YOUR STORE TRAFFIC

Recession Proof DIRECT MAIL STRATEGIES

Part 7: Ways to bring in "Be-Back" and "Lost" Customers.

ADVERTISING STRATEGY ***BY BRETT KITCHEN AND ETHAN KAP***

Last week I dropped in on a home furnishings retailer. I like to do that once in a while just to get a feel for what different stores are doing, and how they handle customers, the shopping experience, etc.

I asked the owner about his business. He said, "terrible". Sales are slow, and the housing marketing is really bad. Last year we did over 7 million, this year if we can do half that and still keep the doors open I'll be happy."

I could see the fear in his eyes. He doesn't have a strategy to keep customers coming in, he's just going to sit by and let his business melt down. He's going to "try" and "only" lose ½ of his sales. He's going to cut expenses, fire employee's, and like a scared little turtle he's going to shrink into a shell and try not to go out of business. That's a bad strategy for surviving a recession.

In the last article we talked about some of the virtues of direct mail, which include the fact that it is targeted, customized and personal. We talked about elements that are essential to making it work well, such as good headlines, the right message, and personality.

What wasn't discussed was how to use direct mail during a recession to guarantee that you gain more market share while competitors are running GOB sales.

HAVE YOUR DIRECT MAIL PIECES BEEN GETTING DECLINING RETURNS?

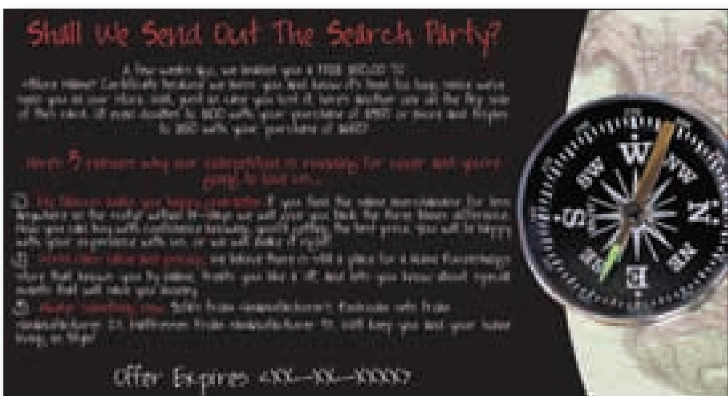
If you've used direct mail in the past without success, you're not alone. Many retailers have tried direct mail unsuccessfully. There are many reasons for this. One of the reasons a mailing fails is because the marketing piece is terrible. It's another "Me Too" ad with products and prices, and "Sale" offers that don't resonate with consumers.

Many retailers do bulk mailings with services that stuff your message in with 79 other offers that few customers have the time to go through or pay attention to.

If you want to get noticed by an attractive member of the opposite sex, what gives you the best chance for success? Introduce yourself with 100 other competitors at the same time, vying for their attention or… meet one on one in a private setting where you can converse, and get to know each other?

This approach does cost more, but cost is not what matters. Return on investment is what matters. Cheaper doesn't mean better in direct mail. In fact it's the inverse, usually the cheaper it is, the less effective it is.

The same goes for postcards. Postcards can work, but



Example of Lost Customer Mailing

SO WHEN YOU SEND DIRECT MAIL,

you want it in an envelope, with a live stamp on it, looking like personal mail...NOT junk mail. This means no "BAR CODE" over the top of the address, and don't address it to "Current Recipient."



Boost Sales
With Fast Moving Bathroom Vanities

- *Fast Selling Designs*
- *Superior Quality*
- *Warehouse & Container Pricing*
- *Broad Selection*

(Bedroom, Dining, Office, Occasional Chairs, Vanities, Accents and Accessories.)







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Cathy Bartolowits





VISIT US IN HIGH POINT
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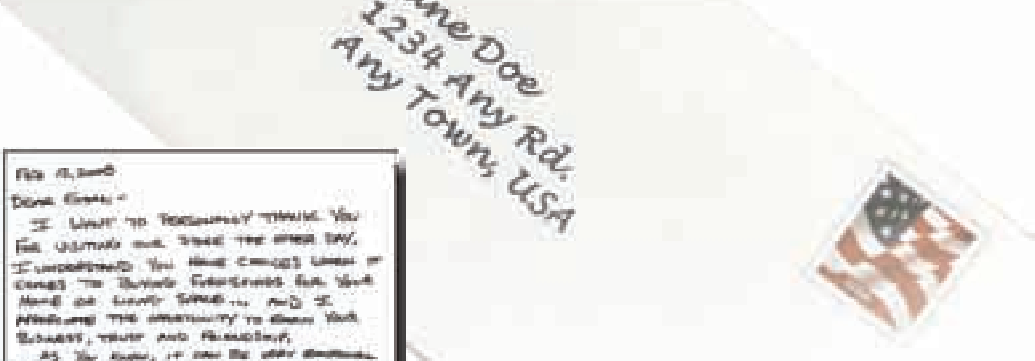




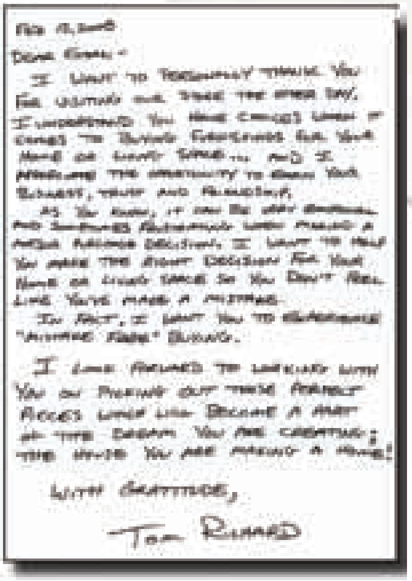


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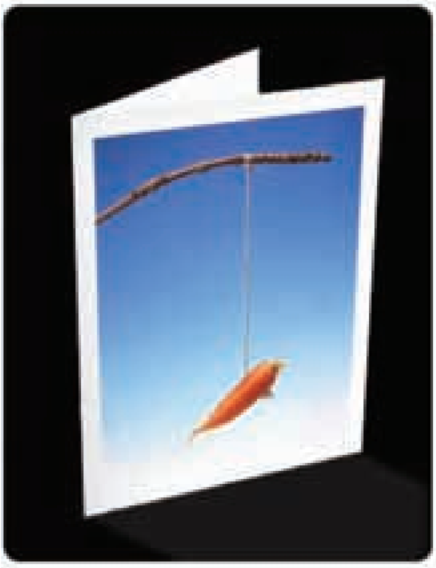


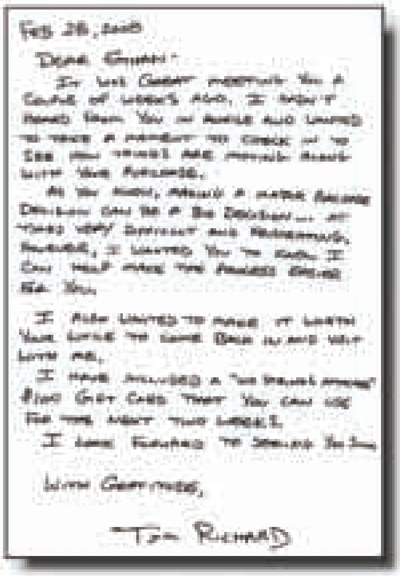




CARD #1: SEND IMMEDIATELY

Use a 3 step sequence of mailings to get them back into the store. People respond at much higher levels when they feel like you care about them, and miss them.





CARD #2: AFTER 14 DAYS

without question, letters have been proven to work much better than cold postcard mailings.

So when you send direct mail, you want it in an envelope, with a live stamp on it, looking like personal mail…NOT junk mail. This means no "BAR CODE" over the top of the address, and don't address it to "Current Recipient."

A second reason that retailers get poor results is that they don't know the recipients and the recipients don't know them. The best lists contain names that include current customers, be-backs and lost customers.

Lastly, mail fails because it's simply poorly done. Let's expand on the "getting noticed" dating comparison above. If you want to get noticed and form a personal relationship, your chances for success go up infinitely if there is some aspect of you that has the potential to be attractive to another person when looked at one-on-one. This can take the form of looks, personality, shared interests, or other traits you possess that have the potential to positively impact a relationship. Similarly, this is the only way to do direct mail if you want to receive maximum impact and success. You must make it personal and you must make your customer want to get into a relationship with you.

Bad headlines (or worse, NO headline at all) bad copy, boring "me too" offers, product and price instead of personality and personalization. The marketing pieces most home furnishings retailers send out are doomed to failure before they even leave the post office. They are bland and unappealing.

TWO EFFECTIVE DIRECT MAIL SYSTEMS

Let's look at 2 simple direct mail systems that can be implemented in just 14 days. Properly done, these will produce a marked improvement in sales.

SYSTEM #1. THE BE-BACK CAMPAIGN

During tough times it's essential to take advantage of every selling opportunity that you have. There are three ways people initiate contact with your company; on the phone, on the web, and walking into your store.

These are HOT, interested buyers, who WILL be buying what you sell at some point in the future. They may not be

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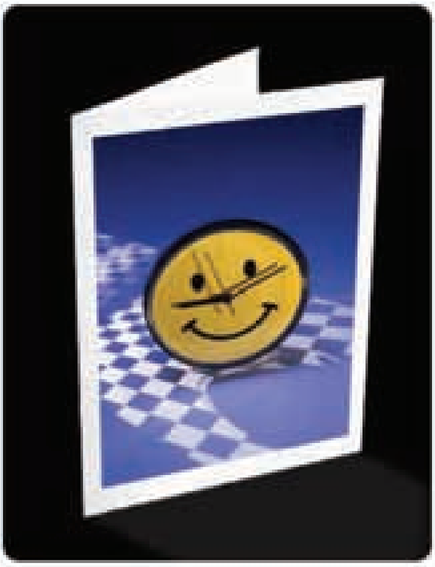
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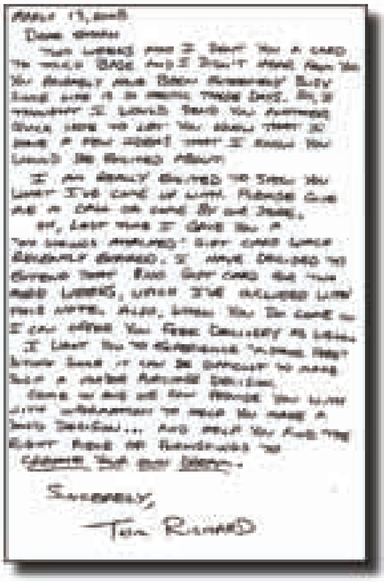
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Card #3: 28 Days After Start

Set up an automatic system with a printer who knows how to manage multi-step mailings, and can personalize them with actual handwriting. This is huge! No one sends out three handwritten follow-up cards in a row to people who haven't even bought yet.

ready right this second to drop $5,000 on a new dining room set (image that!), but they will be buying in the future.

So here is something you can do to follow up with these people to make sure that when they buy, it is from you. Here's how it works.

Step 1. Use what we call the Iron Clad Lead Capture System™ to capture contact information from your prospects. Some techniques you can use to capture email and physical addresses were presented in part 4 of this "Double Your Store Traffic" series posted to the furninfo.com website in May 2007. The article gives sample scripts and provides more detail, but basically this involves giving the prospect something of value, in order to get something of value.

To have any chance of success, the approach must be non-threatening. Your salespeople might give browsers a bottle of water, a soda or even a special offer coupon. Following this helpful approach, they can follow-up by offering to send them a free advisory or brochure about the category of home furnishings they are looking for. Of course, the customer must first supply their contact information!

Similar offers can be made on your website. Just give away some irresistible information in return for contact information.

Step 2. Once you've collected contact information you are ready to follow up multiple times over the next six weeks. Follow-up pieces should be personalized, with your customer's name and in actual handwriting.

Another important point is that these mailings must be systematic. Experience has shown that relying on individual sales people, or even yourself to make sure this happens is a recipe for disaster.

Instead, set up an automatic system with a printer who knows how to manage multi-step mailings, and can personalize them with actual handwriting, not print that looks like handwriting. Sample mailing ideas can be found in, the previous article in this series, "Double Your Store Traffic - Part 6: Put A Stamp On It!", posted to the furninfo.com article archives.

Step 3: Three mailings are the minimum that you'll want to follow up with. Then you want to put those people on your newsletter campaign list or regular mailing list so that they constantly get reminded about you.

If you have trouble finding a printer that can do these personalized mailings for you, just send an email message to editor@furninfo.com requesting this information along with your name, store name, email and physical address. You will get the information by return email along with other valuable marketing information. Included will be the name of a company that actually has live human beings on staff that will handwrite your messages, and addresses (economically). This sounds like an irresistible offer, doesn't it?

This is huge! No one sends out three handwritten follow-up cards in a row to people who haven't even bought yet. This will totally differentiate you from all your competition, and generate a huge increase in sales.

RECESSION BUSTING SYSTEM #2. THE LOST CUSTOMER SAVER™

At the risk of insulting some, I'll repeat an overused, yet under utilized statistic that floats around in the business world. "It's 7 times more expensive to get a new customer than it is to keep a current customer."

Of course we've all heard it before. But how many of us truly live by that admonition? This second system that we'll be talking about will show you how to do exactly that. Again, it's a simple system.

Step 1. Find out when a customer is "late" buying from you. When does your average customer return and buy from you? Is it 12 months? 6 months? Whatever that number is, you need to know what it is.

From there, simply generate a list of customers who


YOUR NEXT BIG JOB
JUST GOT EASIER.
COMMERCIAL
Ford
TRUCK SEASON
HURRY, SAVINGS END MARCH 31.
2008 E-SERIES CARGO VAN
2008 F-350 SUPER DUTY®
2008 F-450 SUPER DUTY®
2008 F-750 SUPER DUTY®
COMMERCIAL TRUCK SEASON IS YOUR BEST CHANCE TO SAVE ON THE MOST VERSATILE AND CAPABLE LINE OF TRUCKS ON THE ROAD. RIGHT NOW, GET HUGE SAVINGS ON EVERY NEW BUILT FORD TOUGH COMMERCIAL TRUCK IN STOCK. NOBODY SELLS MORE COMMERCIAL TRUCKS THAN FORD – 23 YEARS AND COUNTING.* VISIT US AT WWW.COMMTRUCK.FORD.COM
FOR THE REALLY TOUGH JOBS.
BUILT Ford TOUGH
*Based on R. L. Polk U.S. registrations for Class 2-7, '85-CYTD through November 2007.

LOST CUSTOMER MAILINGS





Examples of Lost Customer Mailings

Find Out When A Customer Is "Late" Buying From You.

When does your average customer return and buy from you? Is it 12 months? 6 months? Whatever that number is, you need to know what it is.

haven't purchased in over that time period. For most furniture retailers 12 months is a good place to start.

Step 2. Use a 3 step sequence of mailings to get them back into the store.

There are some secrets to making these mailings work properly. The marketing pieces must include four key ingredients

- *Identify them by name.*
- *Tell them you know they haven't been in the store in a while.*
- *Show them that you value them as a customer, and miss them*
- *Give them a special offer to invite them back.*

Sometimes retailers ask "If these people get my other ads and mailers and they haven't responded, how is this going to work?" The answer to that is in the 4 key ingredients above.

People respond at much higher levels to offers when they feel they have been crafted specifically for them. When they feel like you care about them, and miss them, they respond.

In tough times, every customer is precious. Use these 2 systems to take advantage of the traffic and customers that you already have, and you'll see a clear improvement in sales immediately.

Brett Kitchen and Ethan Kap are Co-founders of Furniture Marketing Systems, and are commonly known as the "Traffic Guys." Brett and Ethan run a retailer Marketing Mastermind Group to help retailers increase store traffic and sales, while cutting the fat and waste from current advertising. They don't sell advertising services. Questions on any aspect of direct response marketing can be sent to Brett and Ethan care of FURNITURE WORLD at bretk@furninfo.com or call them direct at 1-800-393-2054.

If you want more information on how to thrive during a recession and how to implement these systems in your store, you can get a free copy of the Popular White paper on Recession Proofing your Furniture Store at www.savetheindustry.com/recessionproof. You can also listen to a free recorded seminar where we discuss in detail how to recession proof your company by using these systems and more.

Massoud sees bigger picture with ePreVue

ePreVue, the industry-leading, internet-based product visualization software, is opening the eyes of leading furniture retailers and manufacturers alike. Why? It enables customers to browse your entire showroom or catalog on-line, create thousands of custom fabric/color combinations, and pre-select purchases without sales pressure – all from the comfort of home with just a connection to the Internet.

To open your eyes, see us the High Point Market, IHFC Main, Retail Resource Center, 12th floor, Space #2, April 7th- 13th, 2008, or call 800-964-3876, ext. 253.





"MicroD has done an incredible job in redesigning and launching our new website based on its ePreVue platform… it provides real value to our customers by providing them a way to visualize all of our styles and fabrics."
Chuck Massoud
President
Massoud Furniture Company



"MicroD built a world class website for us at a very affordable price making it one of the best investments for Massoud Furniture. MicroD's ePreVue service enables us to create more brand recognition of our products to the consumers, ultimately leading to more sales."
Ardella Norwood
Controller
Massoud Furniture Company

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The best furniture business technology.

THE SEVEN LOST

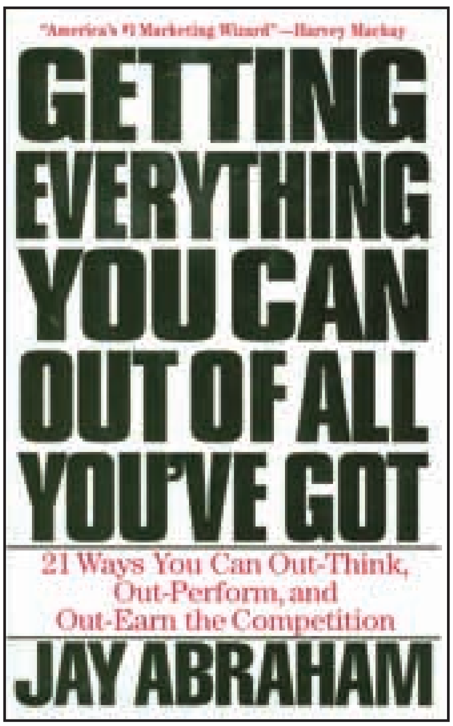
AD SECRETS

UPDATED FOR A DIGITAL AGE

Part 4: Old marketing assumes that someone was reading your ads. Now, if you want customers to pay attention, try These People Media™ Techniques.

ADVERTISING STRATEGIES BY *LARRY MULLINS*

Jay Abraham is a marketing genius. He has been praised by Tony Robbins, Ken Blanchard, Steven Covey, Mike Basch (the founder of FedEx) and Harvey Mackay. You can hire him for $5,000 an hour and he will solve your marketing problems and make you a pile of money. Or, you could read his book, *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got* and he will tell you his secrets. (New copies go for about $65 on Amazon, used copies are much less.) Now, why would Jay Abraham tell all his secrets in a book anyone can buy? Because he knows that lots of people will buy his book, but only about one percent of the people who buy his book will study it carefully and use the information. Most of the people who do so are people like me … pros who must study every single thing they can so that they can apply new information to help their time-starved clients make money.



The furniture retailing world is changing so fast furniture retailers have to work twice as hard to stay ahead of the pack. Jay Abraham is all about People Media™. His ideas were profiled in the FURNITURE WORLD article, *Visionary Selling - Part 1 - Take The Time To Understand & Deliver Priceless Value* that is posted to the Marketing Management article archives on www.furninfo.com. In this issue we will take some of his concepts to another level and begin to integrate them with emerging digital techniques. A "People Media™" digital age is fast approaching that offers an opportunity for independent home furnishings retailers to relate to their communities in ways that will make marketing easier. They will be able to expand market share because they can use People Media™ techniques in ways that the big boxes cannot.

Your digital People Media™ skills could eventually determine your survival as a furniture store in the decades ahead. Regardless of the size of your business, and even if you have a chain of stores, time is running out for you to establish a footprint in cyberspace that helps you develop a personal relationship with customers. Before we get into digital techniques, let's review the basics of the People Media™ concept. Then let's see how to integrate these basics, Jay Abraham's ideas, and digital techniques in a few simple but effective ways.

Your People Media™ are any and all factors relating to your store that enter the consciousness of associates, customers, vendors, prospective customers, their friends, and the community at large. Many of these factors are beyond your direct control, but they are all influenced by the culture of your organization and you are responsible for that. The factors influencing culture are wide and varied, but if you get them right, everything else regarding morale and attitude will be relatively easy. There are

BEFORE WE GET INTO DIGITAL TECHNIQUES,

let's review the basics of the People Media™ concept. Then let's see how to integrate these basics, Jay Abraham's ideas, and digital techniques in a few simple but effective ways.



A Typical Furniture Store Owner Can Make $5,260 Just By Waking Up!

Replace Your Table Lamp Bulbs
40 Watt Standard Frost to a 9 watt spiral: Annual Savings $12.40 per lamp

Replace Your Recessed Downlights
65 BR40 to a 23 Watt PAR38CFL Annual Savings $16.80 per lamp

Replace Your Track Light Bulbs
90PAR38 to a 60PAR38/IRC: Annual Savings $12.00 per lamp

100 Table Lamps x $12.40 =	$1,240
25 Downlights x $16.80 =	$420
300 Track Heads x $12.00 =	$3,600
Total Annual Savings*	$5,260

See us in High Point

NHFA Retailer Resource Center, IHFC-M1210

** Savings calculations incorporate: Average hours per day lights on, Average days per week lights on, Average kilowatt hour rate, Average cost per lamp change, Rated average Lamp life, Lamp cost.*



Wake Up!

Every watt of electricity you save is worth 40 cents, probably more. You can save money and have a great looking store. Call us today to place your order and start saving money.

Want to know how much YOU can save? Want to improve the color and look of your displays? Give us a call. Ask for a free lighting energy energy analysis.

800-222-LAMP (5267)

Service Lamp Corp.
the accent is on service
112 Route 73, Voorhees, NJ 08043



In his book, "Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got," Jay recommends that you offer a no-risk guarantee for your products. Jay practices what he preaches. His Mastermind Business Growth System" audio program offers this guarantee: "If you are not 100% satisfied with the Master Mind Business System, you may return it in 30 days for a full refund. If you keep it, we guarantee that your sales and profits will at least double by December 31, 2008, or your money will be refunded." Some stores will not "risk" it. None of the big boxes advertise such a guarantee. But think about it. Imagine how nervous a woman is when going to a new store and spending many times what Jay's program costs on a single piece of furniture! If you want to out-perform the big boxes you will need to out-guarantee them.



Marketing Genius Jay Abraham Offers A Bold Guarantee. Shouldn't Home Furnishings Retailers Follow His Example?

the basic material issues, of course. The condition of the parking lot, the general appearance of the store and staff, the way associates answer the phone, even the wholesomeness of the bathrooms speak to customers and associates. They either say we are professionals who master every detail of the shopping experience, or they say something else. The take home message: People Media™ determine the culture of a company, and the CEO can never, ever delegate this leadership responsibility.

TWO KINDS OF STORES WILL SURVIVE

In the last article of this series it was stated that only two kinds of furniture stores will survive the current crisis: The old-fashioned, no-service "stack 'em up and blow 'em out stores, and the stores that adopt new marketing techniques to tell their story. If you are service oriented, open-minded, and hungry, there are techniques you can use to take advantage of the most exciting opportunities in home furnishings history. A few dealers contacted FURNITURE WORLD to ask if the article implied that outlet stores would have no role in the future. Not so. They have a huge role to play if they adopt new marketing techniques to tell their story.

Jay Abraham is all about telling your story by means of People Media™. He has a disarmingly simple approach to marketing, and therein lies his genius. There are three ways, and only three, to increase your sales volume, Abraham says. Adjusted to furniture lingo, they are:

- *Increase your number of customers.*
- *Increase the size of your tickets.*
- *Increase the number of times your customers visit your store.*

The balance of Jay's program consists of creative techniques to do all three of the above. According to Jay, if you could increase your effectiveness by a mere ten percent in each of the above categories, you would double your volume. (He does the math; it works. Check it out.) Now that you have this simple solution in mind, you are ready to take the next step, that will get you started making the digital revolution work for you.

FIRST: INCREASE YOUR NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS.

If the best you can do is the same thing your competitors are doing, nothing will change. Abraham uses the analogy of fishing. If you have one pole in the water you will land just so many fish. If you put ten poles in the water with different kinds of bait you will attract and land ten times as many. Ten poles? Sure thing:

1. Direct Mail: You need a good bought list, and a regular program of effective, varied mailings at least six times a year. Capture names for your inner-circle, preferred customer list.

2. High Impact Events: A couple of store-run high impact events a year will add impressively to your bottom line and attract new customers.

3. In-store Seminars: Set up a program of in-store decorating seminars. Certain to attract new customers and make you stand out.





Visit Us In High Point
Furniture Plaza #523

el ran

el ran combines design, craftsmanship and constant innovation to create a line of furniture that appeals to a discerning and diverse range of customers.
We understand our clients' needs – which guarantees their satisfaction.

el ran 2751 Trans-Canada Highway, Pointe-Claire, QC H9R 1B4 Telephone: 1-800-361-6546 | www.elran.com

Lost Ad Secrets

4. Shop At Home Program: Begin a Shop at Home program. Another excellent way to increase market share and attract new faces.

5. Use Email: Start capturing email addresses and set up a regular line of permission marketing with a younger generation of shoppers.

6. Advertise Smarter: Make your advertising two or three times more effective. Check out the article archives on www.furninfo.com for a wealth of articles on these subjects.

7. People Media™ Messages: Improve the People Media™ messages you are sending to your staff. Be positive, walk positive, talk positive, think positive. Forget recession. Abraham writes: "We are always living in uncertain times. And regarding the "R-word", my advice is to forget it."

8. Brainstorm In-house: Brainstorm with your staff about ways to increase traffic, and assign teams to investigate their ideas and the topics above and come up with action plans for getting programs started.

9. Pay More Attention To Your Website: Monitor your website at least weekly … and keep it up to date. Add a "stream" featuring you talking to website visitors.





Tell Your Story... This Is Your Best Hope...

It's hard to believe, but there are big box furniture stores spending millions of dollars on advertising each week who don't have a single trained copywriter on staff. So most use label headlines and benefit-starved copy. Above is the front page of a flyer for an excellent big box store... beautiful graphics, but "where's the beef?" No unique selling proposition here or in the pages that follow. No specifics about selection, expertise of the sales people, no benefits, just big prices.

On the other hand, most independent furniture stores have a legitimate, story to tell. It takes unusual, powerfully written ads such as the one at right (adjusted to a store's image) to stop prospects in their tracks. This outlet store guarantees what it sells and interfaces with the community. Using strong, informative print it ended 2007 well ahead of 2006. Not many stores can say that.

Lost Ad Secrets Updated

10. Tell Your Story: Develop a handout that tells your story, give it to every customer, distribute it to your staff, mail it out… it is an eloquent spokesperson.

11. Cash In On The Giant TV Fad: Make a deal with a media store to set up a home entertainment display featuring your best reclining theatre group and one of their premier large screen TVs in both your store and theirs ... sign both displays appropriately and give discount coupons.

12. Adjust Sales Commissions: In between events, double the sales commission on any new customers a salesperson closes, and triple it for any they bring in by their own efforts. If this sounds nuts blame Jay Abraham. He gives some impressive stats in his book that make this move plausible. There, that's ten plus two for good measure. How is that for exceeding your expectations? Your staff can come up with more. Just be sure someone, or a team, is responsible to put the best ones into action and report back on a specific date.

SECOND: INCREASE THE SIZE OF YOUR TICKETS.

This is so simple and powerful that it has been overlooked in recent years. The idea is that it costs a fortune to bring in a new customer. Each one is worth her weight in gold. Lets say you have succeeded in bringing in a new customer who buys a beautiful leather sofa. Assume your net profit is only $100 when you consider the promotional cost of bringing her in, paying double sales commission, overhead, etc.. Your salesperson is sharp, however, and sells her the matching loveseat. Since you have already paid to bring her in and paid the overhead, all you need deduct is the sales commission. You make $300 profit on the loveseat. Your net just quadrupled on one transaction! Just imagine if you have trained your salesperson to add tables, lamps and on and on!

1. Spiffs: Spiff add-ons generously.

2. Add-On Contests: Have periodic contests for best add-on performances (number of items per ticket) rather

Negative Advertising Often Backfires...

The ad (near right) does a decent job of telling a story and then ruins it with a huge photo of a "competitor's" workman wiping off his nose. Such advertising violates the principle of "fusion" - the consumer sees everything as a single graphic at first. Hence the connection of the workman with Carpet One. The Great Western Cereal Company was destroyed by ads like this (far right). Around 1900 they had a big campaign showing how cereal bugs could not get into their boxes. But the illustration caused people to "fuse" the bugs with the cereal and sales plummeted.





than volume.

3. Fabric Protection: Spiff generously and promptly if you have a fabric protection program that works for you and provides value for your customers.

4. Step-Ups: Step-ups are equally powerful profit generators and should be done keeping the customer's needs for the superior benefits of higher priced items in mind. Sales of more profitable goods can be encouraged with incentives based on the gross margin of items sold.

5. Delivery Incentives: Train the warehouse crew to understand the mathematics of careless damage to merchandise. Reward damage-free performances.

6. Brainstorm with the staff for other ways to plus the profit of each transaction. Reward the best ideas.

THIRD: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TIMES YOUR CUSTOMERS VISIT YOUR STORE.

Abraham says that, "When given an option or an incentive, people are willing to buy more than they ordinarily do." This may seem to be appropriate for small ticket items only, but don't pass it by too quickly.

1. Preferred Customer Lists: Special events are always welcome to customers who like your store. Not always a sales event. Several independents have annual open house events in which they have a couple of local celebrities, door prizes, refreshments, radio remote, etc. These are very well attended, wall-to-wall people.

2. E-Newsletters: Capture email addresses for a cyberspace newsletter. This is called permission marketing. It will become the wave of the future. A snail mail version is important as well. If your buyers return from market and go on-and-on about this product or that, but you never tell your customers about the newest trends, designs and fabrics, you are missing a big opportunity.

3. Decorating Clinics: Have a preferred customer decorating clinic. Maybe two or three.

4. Follow-Up: Salespeople must send thank you notes



"Best Profit Per Square Foot In My Entire Lineup!"

-Don Olsen, Owner



DeCamp & Stradford Furniture Headquarters

It's Another Amazing Wallbeds! Success Story

Don's store has sold an average of 1.5 Wallbeds per month for the past 14 years. The 247th Wallbed is on the way.

That's pretty remarkable! Particularly when you consider that his store is in a town of 7,500, 100 miles north of Seattle.

You don't have to be a big guy in a big town to win with Wallbeds, as Don can tell you.

Wallbeds has slowly and carefully developed a network of retail partners. There are still markets open, so, if you are interested in looking at this high performing category, please give us a call. We would like to share a few more success stories with you, and explore the possibility of your company becoming another one!



Wallbeds! in many styles and finishes

WALLBEDS ! Hiddenbed

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High Point Furniture Plaza
San Francisco Mart 1

www.Wallbedsinfo.com

a product of WESTCOTT DESIGNS, INC. Richmond, CA 94806
Represented in the US and Canada by Resource Associates, Inc.



Popular Hiddenbed.
Home office to bed in 2 seconds!

Phone **800-934-6711**
Fax **888-477-6796** - Email **Wallbeds@earthlink.net**







THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING?

The ad at left uses a gimmick from the 70s... one that insults the intelligence of consumers. It states: "Simmons Mattresses starting at $98"... and adds in small print: "Twin each piece when sold in sets."

Golf shoes could hit a hot price point with the same strategy. If it makes no sense with golf shoes, why do furniture and mattress stores continue to attempt it?

and follow-up sales with phone calls to make sure everything is ok. This actually reduces service calls.

5. Ask For Referrals: Referrals are the most powerful People Media™ tool of all. Jay Abraham says, "Start looking at your clients as dear and valued friends." If this sounds corny, you are in the wrong business. Joe Girard, the "world's greatest salesman", came up with the idea of the "rule of 200." He said we all have about 200 friends, family members, neighbors, colleagues and so forth who like us enough to take our recommendations. Girard built his business on referrals. How do you get them? You ask for them. Abraham has a referral template in his book that is dynamite (Chapter 11). You can also check out the excellent articles by Cathy Finney, "Too Chicken To Ask For Referrals?" - Parts 1 &2 that are posted to the Sales Education article archives on the furninfo.com website.

CONCLUSION

The key message here is that digital communication is changing marketing as we know it, and will eventually revolutionize it. Old marketing assumed that someone was watching your commercials, reading your ads, and paying attention to your salespeople. All you needed to do was interrupt prospects and give them a great sales pitch. But the truth is people are too busy now to pay attention. They are bombarded with weak and hastily prepared advertising messages. The big boxes can afford to flood the market with weak advertising. Unless you are an advertising whiz, their sheer volume of messages will drown you out. But what they can't afford to do is People Media™ on the scale that you can. And herein lies the opportunity for the furniture store of the future.

You will still need direct mail and persuasive print to tell your story for the foreseeable future. However, there is more to say about the online possibilities that will vault your store to another level of People Media™ communication. To do justice to cyberspace applications of People Media™ we will need yet another article.

NEXT ISSUE

The May/June issue of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine will feature a report by the Wall Street Journal on how brick and mortar small retailers are connecting online with customers by using live chats. We will also explore several other ways to propel your store past the competition with low cost digital techniques. In the meantime, trust that: The sky is not falling. Avoid the Chicken Little mindset.

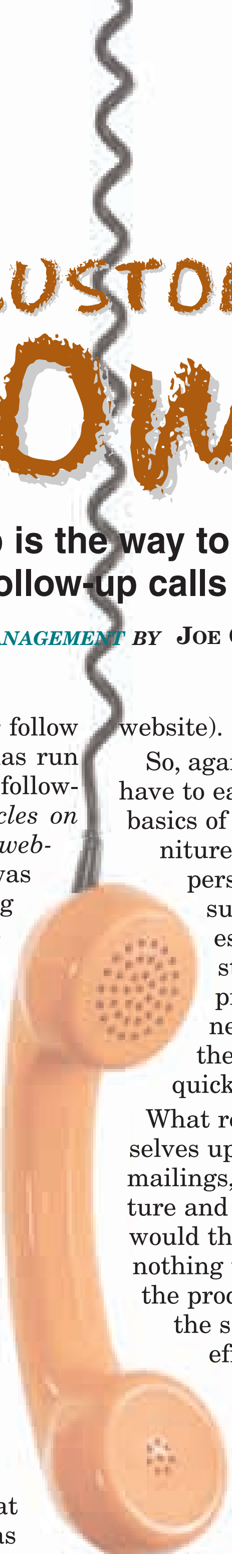
Contributing Editor Larry Mullins has 30+ years experience in the front lines of furniture marketing. Over the past ten years he has developed a Visionary Management program that can impact the culture of an entire organization and bring it to life. He also produces state-of- the-art promotional advertising packages for everything from quick cash flow to complete exit strategies and store closings. Larry is the President of UltraSales, Inc.. Questions about this article can be sent to Larry care of FURNITURE WORLD to mullins@furninfo.com.

See more articles by Larry in the marketing management archives on furninfo.com or call him direct at (904) 794 9212.

ANNOYING CUSTOMERS WITH FOLLOW-UP

Part 6: Although follow-up is the way to get be-back customers, when improperly executed, follow-up calls can be counterproductive.

RETAIL MANAGEMENT BY JOE CAPILLO



What's the deal with aggressive customer follow up? FURNITURE WORLD Magazine has run many articles on the necessity of proper follow-up and follow through (*see list of articles on page 42 that are posted to the www.furninfo.com website*), yet recently on this magazine's website there was an eruption of consumer vitriol concerning annoying and invasive follow-up phone calls by a prominent furniture retailer.

It seems that there is a lot of resistance to this kind of "follow up" among consumers, and the back-and-forth among these consumers centered on how to avoid giving any information to retail furniture salespeople so that they could stay out of the follow-up pool.

One message post told of how a salesperson explained to her customer that she would get into trouble if she didn't get the customer's name and contact information, because phone follow-up was required by this retailer. Imagine that! Obviously this furniture retailer completely missed the point of what customer follow-up is all about.

During a panel discussion several years ago I was asked, "What would you teach salespeople if you could only teach them one thing?" I answered immediately, "Sketch the room". I quickly added that there was another thing I'd teach them that's just as important: how to follow-up. Those two core skills are all they need to successfully improve all three elements of the success equation which is *Opportunities x Close Ratio x Average Sale* (see Understanding Sales Performance Metrics - Part 1 from February/March 2004 FURNITURE WORLD posted to the www.furninfo.com website).

So, again, what's the deal with follow-up? It's this: you have to earn the right to do it. Why do people forget the basics of human interaction when it comes to selling furniture? To get people to trust you enough to give you personal information, you have to serve them in such a way that they believe you have their interests in mind. They have to trust that you understand their issues, and the home decorating problems they want your help to solve. And they need to know that you are focused on getting them to these solutions – not just on making a quick sale.

What reason would there be for people to open themselves up to annoying phone calls, or emails, or "junk" mailings, from someone who merely showed them furniture and told them all about how they could buy it. Why would they extend this privilege to someone who did nothing to help them understand how they might use the products presented to solve a problem about which the salesperson did not take the time or invest the effort to learn?

At every point in the process of customer engagement you need to earn the right to move to the next step in the process. When owners or managers explain that they have salespeople who won't "ask for the order", one of the main reasons why this occurs is that the salesperson knows, deep inside, that he hasn't earned the right to ask for it. It's one of those "inner compass" things that we all feel from time to time that tells us we're not connecting to the other person. We know there's something missing, but are not always sure just what it is. Mostly, it's because we've made the whole

WHY DO SALESPEOPLE HATE "FOLLOW-UP"?

It's because many salespeople know that they have not created a formal, trusting, service-based relationship with their customers.

The Greatest Recession Busting Discovery In Furniture Advertising In 90 Years

The new, Done For You, 3 step System That Uses Emotion, Personalization, and Follow Up To compel customers to buy from only you!

Let the competition keep using tired and ineffective "Product and Price" ads while you GAIN market share using prven systems, even during turbulent economic times.

"I have used these advertising techniques to help furniture retailers thrive during recessions, while competitors were running going out of business sales."

Barrie Bedell
Furniture Advertising Expert

3 Done For You Recession Busting Systems

1 The Advertising System

Get a monthly calendar delivering proven ads written by top copywriters that romance your products, create emotion, and compel customers to come and buy... without harming your good image. (Never again run a lackluster "Product and Price" circular that creates no response.)

"We sold at least an additional $131,000 with "January's Done For You Marketing Piece". We average $160,000 per week and for the two weeks of January 18-31 we sold a total of $499,463, and we were able to document $131,000 in sales via media code and IPod request. This was an increase of 35%. WOW! Thanks and we're definitely looking forward to what is next."

Kent Bouldin
Owner Luxury Of Leather, 5 locations in Texas

2 The "Be Back" Saver System

Stop letting money walk out the door, never to return. Now you can capture and follow up automatically with 'be backs' with a personalized, handwritten card system that brings them back to buy from you.

"I built my retail business on the shoulders of this program. Any retailer who doesn't have a systematic approach to converting be backs into customers is loosing big money...and in today's economy that's just not acceptable." Tom Richard

3 The "Lost Customer Saver" system

Your past customer list is your goldmine. Use our proven system to 're-activate' old customers who haven't been in the store for a while...automatically.

"I just ran your lost customer system and on the first two steps we had incredible response. I was shocked at how well it worked. We had customers coming in that we haven't seen in years!"
Marlin Martin, Stone Barn Furniture, PA

This is a "Application Only" program. We screen all applicants to make sure they are a good fit.

GET ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED:
Call 800-393-2054 and ask for Brian

(Don't worry about a hard sale. Brian will kindly answer all your questions and help you decide if it is a good fit for your store.)

BONUS #1 for Joining: VETO YOUR TOP COMPETITOR so they may never join the program.
(WARNING: Before allowing you to join we must verify that you are not already on the veto list.)

BONUS #2:



Traffic Guys Enterprises


1967-2007
Celebrating
40 Years
Huppe
Huppé is a Canadian Manufacturer distributing products throughout Canada and the United States.
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101 South Hamilton Street
Space 118
Showrooms in High Point and Toronto
225 rue de la Jacques-Cartier P.O. Box 718 Victoriaville, Québec, Canada G6P 6V7
Tel: 819-758-1529 Fax: 800-263-3480
website: www.huppe.net e-mail: info@huppe.net



ANNOYING FOLLOW-UP

engagement about us, our “stuff”, our offers, our rules – and not at all about them, their needs, or their lives.

Why do salespeople hate “follow-up”? (they do, you know). Why do retailers have to have rules, policies and make demands to ensure that this critical performance issue is properly addressed? It’s because many salespeople know that they have not created a formal, trusting, service-based relationship with their customers. Because of this fact they also know that their calls will be perceived by customers as invasive and annoying. You don’t need to have much sales experience to know that customers don’t want to field pointless follow-up calls just because they chose to shop in a furniture store.



To Get People To Trust You

Enough To Share Their Personal Information you have to serve them in such a way that they believe you have their interests in mind.

Furniture salespeople and their managers would be wise to remember this rule: no follow-up should be made without the customer’s permission, and no follow-up calls should be made to anyone who doesn’t already expect to be called. Since we know that be-back customers are our lifeblood, getting them back is a primary goal of our selling strategy. The selling strategy is built around seeking first to understand, then to be understood (one of Steven Covey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective People). It requires that retail sales associates deal with their consumers’ real decorating problems with no selling agenda in mind. Doing this connects salespeople who have good social skills and an aptitude for sales, to customers in such a way that they gladly give them permission to stay in touch, to follow up. And, these customers often become “be-backs” – that class of customers who buy over 60% of the time on that return visit.

Here’s the biggest problem for our industry about forced follow-up by mega-retailers as I see it: It works just enough times to keep them doing it. When you have customers numbered in the tens of thousands, if a small percentage respond to what most would consider invasive follow-up, a lot of sales can be generated. Then, the rest of us get to deal with

ONE MESSAGE POST ON WWW.FURNINFO.COM

describes how a salesperson told her customer that she would get into trouble if she didn't collect contact information. Imagine that!

those remaining consumers who come to our stores in a highly combative and closed-minded mood. If you want to drive follow up as a critical selling initiative, find ways to earn the right to do it.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLES ON FOLLOW-UP

Building Personal Clientele *(2006 - by Joe Capillo) Developing a client base, and keeping it active and up-to-date is the one, key activity that can help our salespeople to earn higher incomes. That's why it is imperative for retail managers and salespeople to take responsibility for pursuing a one-to-one marketing strategy.*

Follow-up Or Fall Down - Parts 1 &2 *(1997 - Cathy Finney) Shy or uneasy about making follow-up calls? Don't like rejection? Here are sure-fire ways to follow-up successfully and consistently.*

Double Your Store Traffic - Part 3 *(2007 - Brett Kitchen and Ethan Kap)How many people call your store? How many come in the store but don't buy. How many visitors do you get on your website? Here are surefire ways to collect information on every potential customer that calls, visits your website or walks into your store.*

Understanding Sales Performance Metrics *- Parts 1 -4 (2004 - Joe Capillo) Sales metrics, those calculations we use to measure our effectiveness in dealing with customers, are the most misunderstood and underused measurements in retail furniture stores.*

I'm Here, Your "Sketchee!" *(2007 - Cathy Finney) Making and actually using rough sketches of your customer's rooms can improve the quality of the information you collect, as well as the effectiveness of your follow-up.*

Staying Alive During Tough Times -Part 1 *(2007 - Joe Capillo) Great salespeople have a plan for the bad times. It's the same plan they have for the good times, and it revolves around developing and maintaining relationships with all of the customers they get to engage.*

Staying Alive During Slow Times - Part 2 *(2007 -Joe Capillo) Consumer research suggests that furniture retailers need to have a strategy to stay connected to customers throughout each of the five stages of the home furnishings purchasing process. Most stores fall down right at the beginning "planning" stage because that's where consumers need more help than most furniture stores are set up to provide.*

Staying Alive During Tough Times - Part 3 *(2007) Joe Capillo explains how the most effective and productive salespeople can return 30% or more of monthly Ups as be-backs. Why is it important to have a system to encourage this? Because these customers are 40% more likely to buy.*

Staying Alive During Slow Times- Part 4 *(2007 - Joe Capillo) A formal customer engagement strategy helps salespeople produce sales from those customers who should buy from you, but don't.*

Joe Capillo is a furniture industry veteran with 35 years combined experience as a retail consultant and retail industry executive.

He is a contributing editor to FURNITURE WORLD and a frequent speaker at industry functions. Joe makes himself available for private consultations on any aspect of retail sales management and sales education. He can be reached at joecapillo@furninfo.com. See many more articles by Joe Capillo on the FURNITURE WORLD website furninfo.com.

DECORATING SCHOOL
Crash Course

Lesson #6: Successful accessorizing: Tell customers about winning strategies they can use to show-off furnishings and "wow" their friends.

Learning Basic Skills By: *Margarett DeGange, M.Ed.*

Editor's note: *This is the sixth article in our Decorating Crash Course series. The text is written so that you can easily use it to conduct a customer seminar on successful accessorizing. It can be presented "as is" but you should add additional elements to give your seminars a personal touch as outlined in the December/January 2007 issue of FURNITURE WORLD Magazine, "Simple but Sensational Seminars: Keys to a Memorable Presentation," posted to the article archives on www.furninfo.com. Decorating seminars are a fantastic way to get quality leads and referrals. They help customers to solve decorating problems, and they position you as a home furnishings expert.*

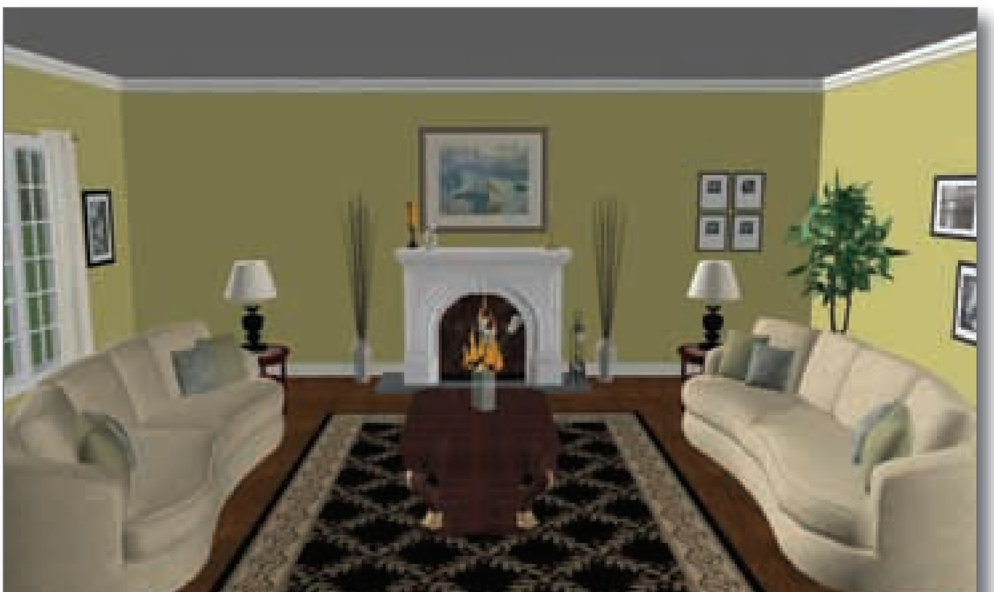
Quotation marks only appear at the very beginning and end of the "sample seminar script" for ease of presentation.

"The only thing that separates us from the animals is our ability to accessorize." *- Robert Harling*

SAMPLE SCRIPT SUCCESSFUL ACCESSORIZING

"Humans have an innate desire to accessorize the things that touch our lives. We decorate our food, our bodies, our land, and our wardrobes with accessories of every color and texture imaginable. And our homes are no exception. Most homeowners look for opportunities to embellish the home and bring it beyond the functional and into the arena of the beautiful. Home accessorizing is the way we accomplish this.

Accessories are the jewelry of an interior. They can add accent and emphasis to your living spaces, and they also serve to pull your entire design together. There is a certain art to placing accessories in the home, but more inspiring than that, there are some basic principles of home accessorizing that if followed, will help lead you to successfully designed interiors. If they are handled well, accessories can make a space come alive by adding interest, texture, shape



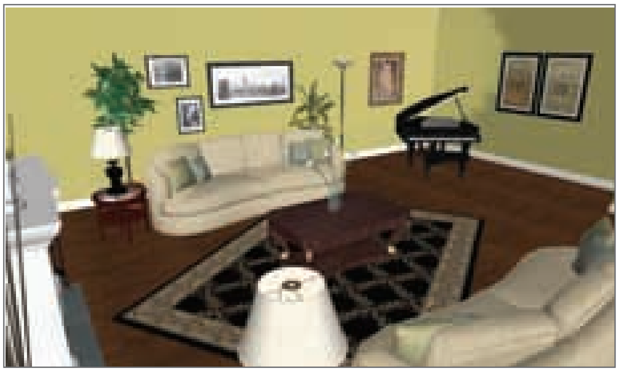


Top down and perspective view graphic created with the online room design tool 3Dream.net

Tell seminar guests, "Area rugs help define the space and help pull it together. They are the room's show-offs."

"To Add Excitement

to your design when working with an area rug, try angling it for a lively feeling. You will be amazed at how this can open up a room."



Perspective view graphic created with the online room design tool 3Dream.net



ACCESSORIZING
BASICS AT A GLANCE

•Play up the focal point. Celebrate it.

•Remember scale, weight, and proportion.

•Use area rugs to define an area, pull a space together, and add color, texture, and pattern.

•Simple is best. Don't clutter with "stuff". Be purposeful in your use of accessories.

•Match wide with wide, narrow with narrow, and tall spaces with tall accessories.

•Be mindful of scale. Chunky with chunky and delicate with delicate.

•Add variety of elements: textures, shapes, colors, sizes, lines, shapes, materials.

•Create simple groupings with few accessories. Odd numbers and groups of three work well.

•Be bold with wall pieces. Allow framed art to "take up" the space it is occupying.

•Avoid hanging artwork too high or low. Start with the center at 5 feet from the floor.

•Give artwork a little "breathing room" on all sides. Use your flat hand as a guide.

•Use symmetry for two similar or identical pieces; balance for different sized pictures.

•Plants provide a calming effect. Be careful to use proper containers and quality plants.

•Fragrance adds to the finished mood and effect and makes a space more inviting.

and color to a room design. If overdone with accessories, your space can seem cluttered, un-harmonious, and without natural flow.

IDENTIFY & ACCESSORIZE YOUR FOCAL POINT

The very start of accessorizing a room or space begins with identifying your focal point, which will be the main furniture piece (or built-in structure) most likely placed on the DOMINANT wall (the wall you notice most or first when entering a room).

Good accessorizing stems from playing up the focal point, and then continues throughout the room. Play up the focal point, and dress it up to create the room's main emphasis point. For example, if the focal point is a mantle, celebrate it with a grand display of matching vases and floral arrangements on either side of a tall and wide elaborately framed print. If it is a bed or sofa, dress it with beautiful custom throw pillows with loop or brush fringe and a glamorous throw. If it is a large window, dress with European pleated panels edged in tassel fringe, or with a treatment that supports the style of the space and is tasteful and beautiful. Flank a focal point such as a hutch or fireplace with artwork, vases, or accent chairs to enlarge the area, and dress the shelves with unusual interesting glassware, pottery, or collectibles in various textures and sizes with "pops" of color.

SITUATE AREA RUGS DEFINE THE SPACE AND ADD "PUNCH"

After establishing and dressing the focal point, it can be very helpful to give the main activity areas of a space some boundaries. Area rugs help define the space and help pull it together. Area rugs are the room's "show-offs". Although they are actually in the category of flooring, area rugs also act as accessories since they embellish an area with color, texture, and pattern. Best of all, they are easy to move and manipulate and easy to shop for and install.

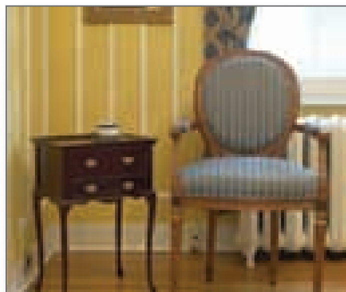
Perspective view graphic created with the online room design tool 3Dream.net



"In Formal Settings *you can use identical or very closely matched chairs, vases, plants, and art that flank or sit balanced on either side of larger pieces of furniture such as a bookcase, armoire, or fireplace."*



Try to mix delicate items with delicate pieces, and chunky or large items with chunky or large pieces. There are times when you can mix weights of objects, but this comes with practice and increased skill level. Allow each display area to have its own focal point, following the rules of scale.



Area rugs provide you with an exceptional opportunity to add design, mood, pattern, texture, warmth, and a great pop of color to a room or to a specific area, and they can be used in large or multi-purpose rooms to break up the space and define individual seating groupings. Area rugs can also help establish a style or theme that other accessories can support. To add extra excitement to your design when working with an area rug, try angling it for a lively feeling. You will be amazed at how this can open up a room. Angling the rug works particularly well when the sofa is also angled.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ROOM ACCESSORIZING

1. Simple is Best: Once your focal point is in place and dressed, and your area rugs are situated, you can begin adding other accents. In creating displays, remember that simple is best. Don't clutter up any of the walls, tables, or the empty areas with stuff. Be purposeful in your use of accessories. Use them with design techniques to add color, height, interest, or emphasis to a particular spot. Always remember to use scale, weight, and proportion. Objects should be balanced and in line with one another and with the other elements of the room. Visual symmetry can work when you do not have matching objects needed for perfectly symmetrical displays. As long as the visual space taken up by two displays are about the same, the effect can work like perfect symmetry to give a feeling of balance.

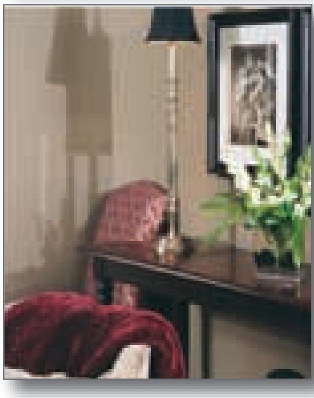
2. Wide with Wide, Narrow with Narrow, Tall with Tall: Always match wide spaces with wide accessories, narrow spaces with narrow accessories, and tall spaces with tall accessories or accessories layered for height. For example, when dressing a wide wall area, use wide framed art, or when dressing a tall, narrow space on the side of a china cabinet, use a tall and narrow vase and floral arrangement. Place a large wooden box, a tall basket, or a plant on a table for added height. Fill up the space you are accessorizing, but leave "breathing room" around the items so the area does not seem cluttered, and the eye and mind have time and space to process the design peacefully.

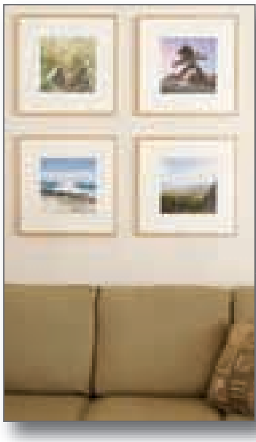
3. Be Mindful of Scale: Chunky with Chunky, Delicate with Delicate: Scale is also important. Try to mix delicate items with delicate pieces, and chunky or large items with chunky or large pieces. For instance, a pair of delicate can-



“Be Bold with Framed Art

To keep an overall sense of balance and harmony, start with the center of the piece at 5 feet up from the floor and make any necessary adjustments from that starting point.







For framed art in a grouping, try not to have too much space between frames. Pictures are normally placed about 4 or 6 inches apart.

dle holders would be a better accessory choice on a dainty coffee table with delicate legs than would a pair of rugged and thick candle holders. There are times when you can mix weights of objects, but this comes with practice and increased skill level. Allow each display area to have its own focal point, following the rules of scale. A big chunky accent table would have a chunky decorative box or lamp, for example. You can then add other items of different sizes for interest once you have your display area focal point in place.

4. Add Variety in the Elements: Use a variety of textures, shapes, colors, and sizes for wall displays, and for tabletop displays use these elements plus elements with varying heights. Try to mix fabric pieces and upholstered furnishings with hard surfaces such as woods, stone, and metals to add beauty and enhance a space.

Contrasting shapes and lines can be used to add visual interest. Mix some horizontal lines in with vertical lines, and use a few round shapes to balance an abundance of right angles and square shapes in a space.

5. Handle Groupings with Simplicity: One of the best things you can do to make your home look beautiful and feel restful is to avoid using too many knick-knacks and accessories. Because home fashion accessories are small, relatively inexpensive, and plentiful, it is very easy to gather far too many of these home jewels. Keep it simple, and use only the accessories that you and your family really love, and those that are meaningful in some way.

Another key for good design is to group like items together. Never spread a collection out all over a room.

Accessories Seminar -Part 6

Create placements where a few attractive items are situated near each other in small clusters of no more than 3 or 4 items. Generally speaking, groups of accessories should not typically be displayed in even numbers, at even heights, or evenly spaced apart unless the setting is contemporary in style, or unless the style is strict in formality. Vary heights, shapes, sizes, and placement for added dimension. Odd numbers create interest, and groups of three work particularly well when placing accessories on shelves, tables, and case goods.

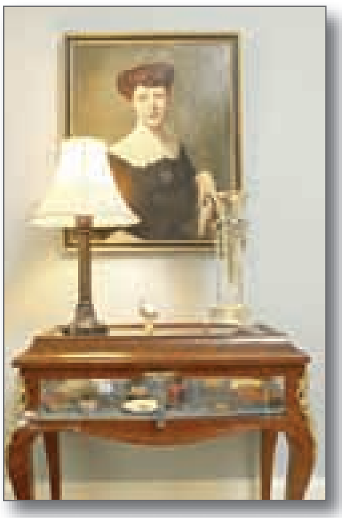
Let's consider a setting on a mantle shelf as an example. Suppose you had a large, chunky framed piece of art on the wall centered over the mantle. On one side of the shelf you might have a husky pottery vase or jar, and on the other, a collection of two or three smaller items that TOGETHER are roughly balanced in visual weight. For added texture and interest, you could set these accessories on a thick, textured fabric runner or mantle scarf.

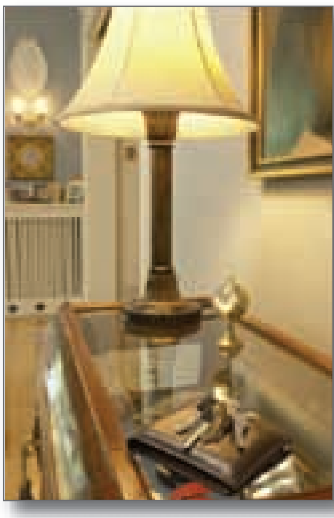
Pairs can be effective for adding interest, particularly in FORMAL settings where perfect symmetry is a key component. Those of you who attended our last two seminars on styles and furniture placement will be familiar with this concept. So, in formal settings you can use identical or very closely matched chairs, vases, plants, and art that flank each other or sit balanced on either side of larger pieces of furniture such as a bookcase, armoire, or a fireplace.

6. Be Bold with Framed Art and Wall Art: Be bold with your wall pieces. Allow the size of framed art to "take up" the space it is occupying, and be in the center point of that space. If the wall space is wide, use a wide framed piece. Avoid putting tiny framed pieces on a big wall. This can look very awkward.

Avoid hanging artwork too high. This is a typical mistake that homeowners make. Also, watch that your framed pieces are not positioned too low. To keep an overall sense of balance and harmony in a space, start with the center of the piece at 5 feet up from the floor and make any necessary adjustments from that starting point. You may need to raise or lower the piece in relation to the other furnishings. Just be aware that eye level and a bit above is a comfortable point at which to view art.

Give artwork a little "breathing room" on all sides. Artwork hung above furniture should take about 2/3 of the visual space above the furniture piece. However, for framed art in a grouping, try not to have too much space between frames. Pictures are normally placed about 4 or 6 inches







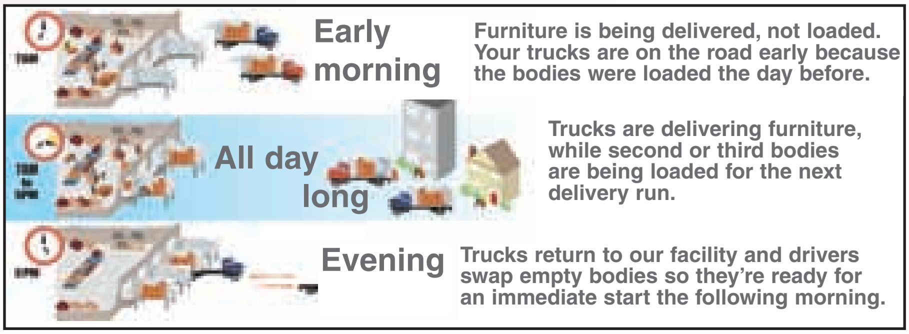
"**BECAUSE HOME FASHION ACCESSORIES ARE SMALL,** *relatively inexpensive, and plentiful, it is easy to gather far too many of these home jewels. Keep it simple, and use only the accessories that you and your family really love."*



Pictured are Scott Frazier, Director of Transportation, Levin Furniture (right) and Shane Broz, Ohio Delivery Supervisor, Levin Furniture (left).

"Demountable truck bodies support the growing needs of our Ohio regional and Pittsburgh remote stores… without the need for a cross dock system or remote warehouse space. The system is very reliable even in adverse weather conditions. Thank you Demountable Concepts!" - Scott Frazier, Levin Furniture

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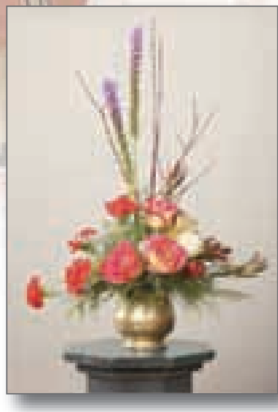
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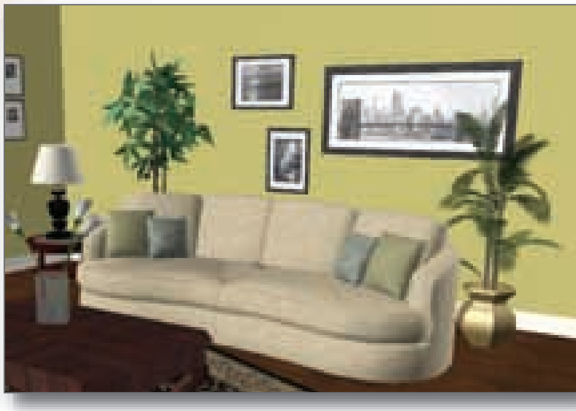
Informative Free Video provides in-depth information about the Demountable system and how similar companies use it to streamline their delivery operations. It's a "must have" for delivery managers. Find out more on the web: *www.demount.com* or email Rustin Cassway, President of Demountable Concepts at *rcassway@demount.com*.



"Create a sense of depth by placing tall plants behind sofas, chairs, or tables, drawing the eye slightly beyond the furniture. Use trees in corners, and smaller plants on top of shelves and armoires."

Perspective view graphic below created with online room design tool 3Dream.net





apart. Use your flat hand as a guide with your fingers touching to see that there is ample space between pictures. The space between objects in your grouping should be this distance apart or less. You can use a 2" space for tighter groupings if needed, as long as the grouping seems uncluttered.

Use symmetrical placement on a wall for 2 very similar or near identical pieces. Create a mirror image for a formal look, or balance for a more traditional or casual look. When dealing with a variety of different sized pictures, go for balance rather than perfect symmetry. For two pictures of the same size, try hanging them side by side on a wide wall with one a few inches above the other, but don't hang either of them too high.

For accessory displays on a wall, anchor the area with the visually heaviest piece at the bottom.

7. Greenery Basics: Plants bring the outdoors in and provide a calming effect. Even artificial plants can make a peaceful impact. Plants also help to clean the air and add a subtle and pleasing fragrance.

If you will be using real plants for accent indoors, consider two areas that could potentially cause problems.

- *Plants can attract insects indoors.*
- *Plants can accumulate moisture or cause water damage.*

Be aware of this, and make sure the floor or area where you place your plants will not be ruined from dirt and water. It is important that you are certain your containers will not leak, and that you do not over-water your plants that sit on surfaces such as wood, that can be ruined from water stains or water damage.

If using artificial plants, aim for quality leaves and stems that will not easily come apart. Make sure the plants look quite real. Purchase the best quality artificial plants that your budget will allow. Artificial plants that look authentic can serve to greatly beautify a space and provide a calming mood.

Create a sense of depth by placing tall plants behind sofas, chairs, or tables, drawing the eye slightly beyond the furniture. Use trees in corners, and smaller plants on top of shelves and armoires, and in little nooks and crannies that would otherwise seem bare or without texture. Use uplights to illuminate plants and throw their shadows towards the ceiling.

8. Fragrance Basics: Fragrance is one part of designing a space that can easily be overlooked, yet a fragrant room can add a great deal to the finished mood and effect. Fragrance will make a room more pleasing and inviting.

Don't Forget To Tell Your Audience...

"If you would like assistance or have questions, feel free to speak with me or one of the other helpful design consultants at "XYZ Furniture Store".

Some natural fragrances can be introduced through real plants. There are also a variety of synthetic fragrances that can have a wonderful effect on your space.

Candles are an excellent way to perfume the air, however, the flame can pose a fire hazard. An alternative to an open flame of a candle is the use of a candle warmer. You can set the candle on the warmer, allowing it to perfume the space.

Also consider such products as electric room fresheners, fragranced air filters, and oil lamps. There are certain products that burn scented oils and at the same time take the impurities from the air. When accessorizing a space, try to factor in fragrance and the many beautiful containers and lamps that can help you to gain a complete room design.

A CALL TO ACTION

By now you are probably inspired to clear some of the clutter from your displays, hang your art at the right height (not too high), and mix it up in terms of color, textures, lines, fabrics, and hard surfaces. The best time to take action is when your knowledge is fresh and motivating.

Set aside an hour or so to work on one area in your home that can use a new look in terms of the accessorizing. Perhaps you can start with a mantle shelf or even a side table in a living area. Begin to apply some of the principles you have just learned to that one small area. Take the next step and complete another area in that same room. Then, tackle moving just one or two of the framed wall pieces that seem to be hung at wrong heights.

Notice the transformation you experience from a few simpler changes. The room will not only look better, but it will feel more restful, too.

In time, as you accessorize different rooms and areas in your home, you will get better at the art and science of successful accessorizing. It is really a matter of practice and of following some basic principles that really work.

If you would like additional assistance or have questions, please feel free to speak with me or one of the other helpful design consultants at "XYZ Furniture Store". We have a number of designers on staff who can help you work with your existing pieces or find the perfect furniture and accessories to make your living spaces both functional and beautiful.

NEXT ISSUE

Lesson #7 – The Fabric of Our Lives: Pattern and Texture Choices that Wear Well and Feel Right.

Margarett DeGange, M.Ed. is a Business and Design Coach in the Home Fashions Industry. She creates and delivers custom training programs for managed businesses and their sales consultants to help them communicate better with customers and increase sales and profits. Margarett is a Writer and Professional Speaker, and the President of The DeGangi Group and The DeGangi School of Interior Decoration, with both on sight and on-line courses in Interior Decorating, Marketing, and Redesign. For almost 20 years she has helped individual and managed business owners in the interior fashions and decorating industries to earn more while fully enjoying the process.

Margarett's new product, Let's Talk About... Decorating (www.letstalkaboutdecorating.com), features pre-packaged seminars for those who want to put on the customer presentations featured in this series of FURNITURE WORLD articles without going through the bother of additional preparation. Questions can be directed to Margarett DeGange at margarett@furninfo.com or Visit DecoratingSchool.com.

EYE POPPING HOME FURNISHINGS

Display Trends

That extra shot of excitement that only great display can provide.

Furniture Trends by Janet Holt-Johnstone

At any of the Markets' waterholes or coffee bars anywhere on the circuit from High Point to Las Vegas to Toronto to Milan to Taipei, you'll hear retailers talking "competitive edge". Never has it been a more vital quality to possess, nor more difficult to achieve.

They say that customers are bored, jaded. They've seen so much variety in shelter magazines and on television design shows that they're saturated with superlatives. And they're confused, too, many of them. Too many choices, some good, some bad. What are the trends, the stylings, the good stuff, they're asking.

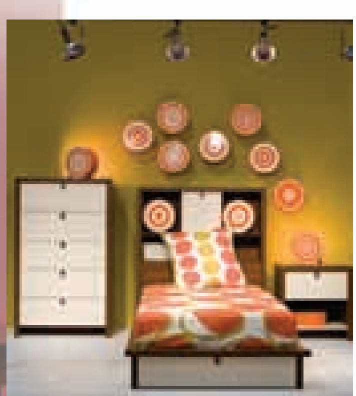
Another dilemma, once the customer defines her/his personal lifestyle direction, then buys sofas, chairs, tables, accents and accessories and takes delivery, more often than not the pieces are not properly placed in their homes for function nor aesthetic appeal.

With tough business conditions the rule for retailers in much of North America, home furnishings retailers need to find a way to keep customers engaged, interested and asking questions.

Quality and service are vital elements, as are techniques often described in FURNITURE WORLD for boosting traffic, closing percentages and average sale. Beyond these issues though, the shopping experience has to be fun. And the best retailers work to ensure that customers get a shot of extra excitement that only great product selection and eye popping display can provide.

Riding to the rescue of both retailer and consumer are top designers and presentation specialists, Pierre D'Anjou and Andre Caron, creators for the ninth consecutive year of the much heralded Trends Display. Visitors flock to the Canadian Home Furnishings Market in spite of the snow, sleet, hail and freezing rain of a northern January, to view and buy the introductions of more than 400 Canadian and international manufacturers and importers. But they also came to see Pierre and Andre's latest offering.

They took a different tack this year, for the first time creating a "furniture gallery". Fourteen displays, each



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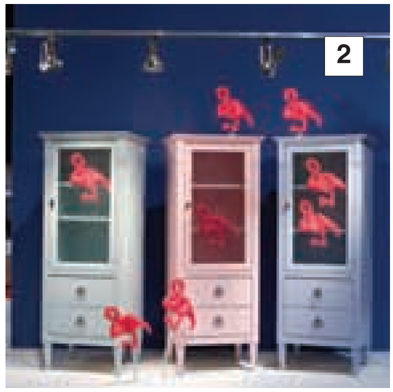
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A Shot Of *extra excitement that only great product selection and eye popping display can provide.*

"Don't Hesitate To Buy Display Items

that jump out at you anywhere. Anything that speaks to you and has style and is unique."





having a different visual ambience were presented to offer retailers and their "needy" customers, inspiration to replicate on the showroom floor or at home. The Display conveyed the impression that one had just walked into a store. Vignettes were themed, well spaced, no clutter, appropriately accessorized with perfect accent lighting.

Each gallery presentation directed customers to other collections on display throughout the store.

"Visually, everything is much more open; we don't block the view of other things," said Pierre. The partners are well known for their imaginative use of unexpected accessory touches. Particularly interesting in these days of environmental consciousness is the opportunity to "recycle".

In the first vignette, the arresting wall décor consists of a series of round metal shapes. "They're 'castaways' from the production of industrial vacuums! I picked them up some months ago, was intrigued by their possibilities and kept them. I recycled! For the vignette, we painted them orange, then stuck vinyl tape on them in

Eye Popping Display Trends

concentric circles. You've got to keep your eyes open!"

Pierre's "castaways" reflect the pattern of the bold bed linens, which soften and enliven South Shore Furniture's clean-line bedroom set. He fitted two of the "shapes" as bedside lamps, effective for the setting.

There wasn't a visitor who didn't smile when visiting the next "gallery" emplacement! There's something about a gaggle of pink flamingoes on a cold winter day that tickles the fancy. And draws attention to A.P. Industries' three identical sweater chests (#2), all in pastel shades. Pierre found the flamboyant birds at an outdoor store. "They're a whimsical touch, inflatable, and actually intended to put around your tent when you're camping!"

An unusual treatment for Bermex's sophisticated dining room conversely enhances its formality. Try putting place settings on the wall rather than on the table! "The wall treatment is actually a collection of party plates that I got at a gift store. They're made of plastic, you know, like model cars. Plates and egg cups and knives and forks and spoons, all assembled." Colour used surprisingly (making trends as well as following them!) is another inexpensive way to create that "edge", here green on warm fuschia.

Sophistication reigns again in vignette #4 with William's elegant chrome-legged sectional sofa. Strong earth tones are made vibrant with the striking wall art, reflected by the vase on the low table. "Actually," said Pierre, "it's the other way 'round! The metal-stick Italian vase was the inspiration. We went to Home Depot and bought inexpensive electric tubing and then, at a sign shop, sheets of chrome-coloured plastic with glue on the back. We wrapped the tubes with the plastic and, the night before Market, I allowed myself to be inspired and had the fun of creating the abstract design for the wall, sketched it first, then applied it to the wall. It's important to enjoy yourself when you are creating vignettes for your store, then the customers will have fun, too!"

The fifth gallery "portrait" kicked off with dazzling snow cone green as its backdrop. It framed Vogel's warm orange swivel chair, the circular patterned fabric offsetting its precise geometric lines. Pierre made a trip to Ikea and discovered, guess what? in the bedroom department, a blue felt headboard with a circular motif. He







THE BACKDROP PICKED UP THE AQUA TONES,

and the strong floral and spiral pattern was fabricated by the gurus from cutout plastic cardboard.

anchored it vertically, partially behind the Hudson television unit, and added the matching Ikea lampshade, turned upside down. To pick up the orange and blue tones, a painting was placed at the back of the unit. Of course, if you feel a bit strange shopping the competition for display accessories, you may want to plan ahead and buy pieces that will create this kind of visual appeal.

In the sixth gallery is another bedroom, this with eye-catching drama. Colour again, bright turquoise picking up the background tone of the brownish-gold and turquoise bedding. The Poitras' headboard is wood, cut in rectilinear shapes, a nod to the trend in angular form. The stunning Gen-Lite lamp is a study in asymmetric hanging crystals. And the piece de resistance in wall décor, asymmetric gold plastic Christmas decorations, mounted so they stand out from the wall! "That way they produce shadows," Pierre told us.

Jaymar's soft beigey-white leather sectional in the seventh gallery is sparked with a springtime pink, black and white collection of toss cushions. Another astonishing accessory choice is the black industrial plastic palettes used both as a table and wall treatment! One of Pierre's "finds", they've been in storage awaiting the proper inspiration. Pink and silver paper tubes accent the "table".

Traffic was arrested by Huppe's striking armchair in vibrant flower power design (#8). The backdrop picked up the aqua tones, and the strong floral and spiral pattern was fabricated by the gurus from cutout plastic cardboard. And a similar flower concept is reproduced in the crystal lamp.

Trica's informal dining set (vignette 9) again picks up floral impact in the upholstered chairs, more gold ("very important this season!"), brown tones and Aruba blue. And more French party plates forming the background design, connected with matching blue cord screwed to the wall.

Darker colours brought a different mood to the next "gallery" vignette (#10). The Italdivani sofa was in an oatmeal fabric, wood at the base, and the lampshade is an excellent match. The partners again sketched the arresting architectural design first, but "remained flexible to change and adjustments on the spot". They used the chrome plastic strips again to good effect.















"It's Important To Enjoy Yourself

when you are creating vignettes for your store, then the customers will have fun, too!"

Cool and clean Canadel table and chairs, black and white, sported well-shaped chairs in refreshingly different styles (#11). Vases are also black and white, and the huge black background square is centered by a square mirror that reflects "other interesting elements in the store".

Romano chairs (#12) are backed by an enormous Ikea print of the Tour Eiffel, a real statement... "and very inexpensive!" It's mounted on snow cone green again, "striking and trendy". The beigey-white swivel chairs are covered in architectural prints, a reflection of the metalwork of the Tour, a series of oval shapes overlapping. And the lamp is unusual. "There's a chandelier within," said Pierre, "and the textile mesh lampshade is transparent, it shows the interior crystal through it."

The paint on the next backdrop is called "chocolate fondue" and sets off the low chrome-legged blue-teal sofa and chair (#13). The designers reverted to glass and fabric-covered Christmas decorations ("some in our collection are years old!") some on the table and in the crystal bowl, and some within half-circle plastic balls mounted on the wall. The lamp "is a sculpture really", chrome with glass balls.

European styling is evident in the shaping, graining and finish of the Durham bedroom set shown in vignette #14. The rose leaf/botanical flavour of the beige, velour textured duvet and pillow coverings, are echoed on the backdrop. "Birds, trees, a salute to the environment." The white ceramic birds and candlesticks (sans candles!) are used as sculptural pieces on the headboard's shelves.

"Don't hesitate to buy things that jump out at you anywhere. Anything that speaks to you and has style and is unique. Borrow things too, whenever you can. And let your imagination and inspiration guide you. Be edgy!"

One of the ways to get that "competitive edge!

Note: The beautiful linens are by Maison du Beau, Lamps and chandeliers used in several of the vignettes are from Gen-Lite and enlivening paints by Benjamin Moore were used throughout the "gallery".

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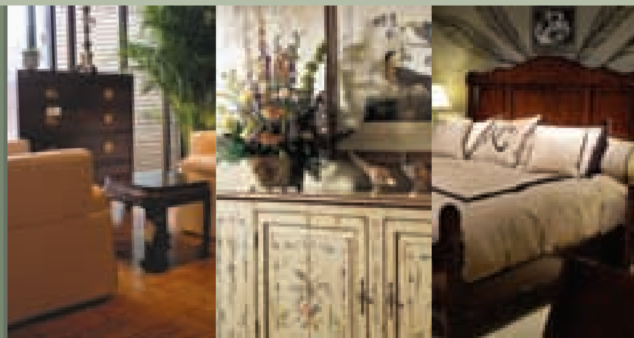
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Design





Capel

Chiswell features a 100 percent olefin face with floral themed cotton borders. This new addition to the Colonial Williamsburg collection is crafted in the USA and is available in four colorways: avocado, onyx, indigo and ruby.

Contact information on index page 78.

Dutailier

The comfort plus glider line has been expanded from 3 to 9 different models. Cushions feature down-like super soft fiber shell. Headrest and lumbar support provide supreme comfort.

Contact information on index page 78.

Dynamic

The large scaled design of the 3400 Series, Linus Pine, enhances the rich look of this country styled furniture. The embossed rustic pine grain laminate is accented by dark knobs and drop handles.

Contact information on index page 78.



Valley View

Sequoia is one of many dining collections made of solid hardwood from the Northeast region of the USA. Features include: panel doors embedded with a spacer ball to absorb vibrations at all humidity levels, a stain channel allowing the stain to fully penetrate each piece of wood, hutch backs are screwed on, and use of traditional dovetailing on all four sides of drawers. *Contact information on index page 78.*





Groovystuff

Dallas-based manufacturer of residential furnishings crafted from sustainably reclaimed teak wood.
Contact information on index page 78.



Dinec

The River View dining group offers a choice of table size, edge, apron and different leg models in a multitude of finishes. The newly introduced modern chair enhances the contemporary style with a touch of chrome. *Contact information on index page 78.*

Design





Classic Loom

This classy side chair is made in Europe using a Beach wood frame upholstered in leather and loom (a natural fiber twisted into twine with a metal center). Available in fifteen different loom colors and thirteen different leather and fabric choices. Line consists of chairs, sofas, beds and case goods. Contact information on index page 78.

Oakwood

Made of solid Oak with beautiful carvings, this attractive sleigh bed is a new addition to the Oak Crest Collection. The headboard has been made taller to accommodate today's higher mattresses. Available in three finishes. Contact information on index page 78.

Fashion Bed

The Emily bed is the picture of refinement and delicacy. Shown in Slate Finish, a one-step powder coat gunmetal color that coordinates with many types of wood case pieces. Contact information on page 78.







Naturescast

Club Chair, Stool and table with Marmor on top. This unique furniture is made of forest and mountain debris such as sustainable fallen twigs, dead shrubs and grass.
Contact information on index page 78.

Bermex

This contemporary dining group made of North American Birch, is available in 86 finishes which can be combined. The 60" x 60" double bow table without leaf is available with 3 apron choices, 10 leg choices (3 different heights) and 20 bases. Matching side and arm chairs have available wood seats, cushions, big cushions with or without webbing as well as 9 leg choices.
Contact information on index page 78.



Serge De Troyer

Offers a complete furniture line and related accessories made from the finest leathers and showcases. This leather writing desk s available in a variety of colors and prints.
Contact information on index page 78.



Design





Nirvana Swing

The Tacoma is one of several styles designed to swing silently and effortlessly along the natural path of an arc. A gentle periodic push on the small handles allows the chair to swing continually. This luxurious chair is covered in top grain leather and fits beautifully in any home environment.

Contact information on index page 78.

Brastilo

A new line of home furnishings and accessories from Brazil. Each piece is crafted from native woods harvested from sustainably managed forests using traditional woodworking and finger-joint techniques.

Contact information on index page 78.

Collezione Europa

This traditionally styled bedroom group is available with high or low posts in Queen and California King sizes. Features include beautifully matched ash burl and Cherry veneers.

Contact information on index page 78.



Adenworks

The eco-friendly Teak Root Set is one-of-a-kind. Bases are made from teak roots which have been left in their original form. Appropriate for indoor or outdoor use. *Contact information on index page 78.*



Andre Originals

Finely finished in Macassar Brown wood, this refined Art Deco chair can be used for dining or occasional seating
Contact information on index page 78.



Mi-di

"Ambition" dining room is made of Birch and offers a choice of table sizes, edge, apron and many different leg options in a multitude of finishes.
Contact information on index page 78.



Design





Huppé

The new Palermo #2600 Bedroom Collection is contemporary in style and shown in Charcoal finish.
Contact information on index page 78.



Darafeev

The Galileo 48" round "Flip Top" gathering table is shown with #925 "Flex Back" armless barstools. This group is available in 24 standard finishes or two tone finishes as shown. Made in USA from American Hardwoods.
Contact information on index page 78.



Elran

Media seating with a track arm and optional fabric inlay for back and seat. This collection is available with endless features and options including a console with storage space under the armrest. *Contact information on index page 78.*



Crinar

Model 9779 is from a new collection featuring glide, swivel, recline , integrated footrest and no sag seating. Contact information on index page 78.



A.A. Laun

From the Loft Collection the Condo Desk with drop-down front is shown in Burnt Sugar finish. This functional piece is available in Primary Maple finishes and all custom colors.

Contact information on index page 78.

Four Hands

The Old Java Bonifacio Square Coffee Table from the Old Java grey Collection. This is a hand crafted, reclaimed teak collection honoring the Javanese culture.

Contact information on index page 78.





Perri

From their new line of sustainable furniture, this attractive sofa has a sustainable wood frame from responsibly managed forests, surrounded by 100% natural wool padding, organic burlap, and jute webbing. The inner core is 100% pure latex foam wrapped with natural feathers surrounded by an organic cotton feather proof ticking that is 230 picks per square inch.

Contact information on index page 78.



Bugatti

This modern sofa is available as a loveseat, chair and sectional, in a variety of fabrics, leathers and combinations.

Contact information on index page 78.

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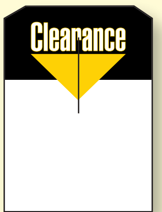
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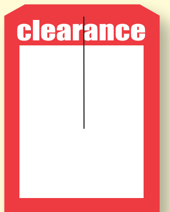
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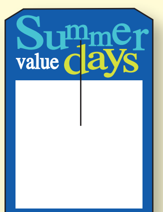
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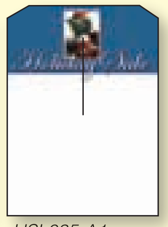
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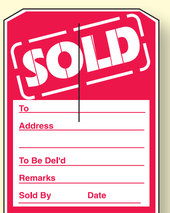


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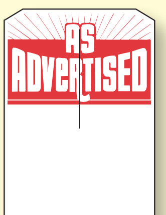
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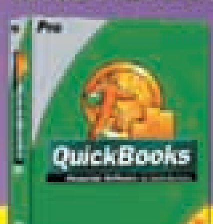


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